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CHAL 0384  
Copy 1 of 4

3 November 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Operations DPS/DCI  
THROUGH : Deputy Director DPS/DCI  
SUBJECT : Rear View Mirror Development  
REFERENCE : CHAL 0367, 24 October 1958

1. I read your reference memorandum with interest. I agree with your opinion that a rear view mirror will be a valuable asset and will be increasingly needed.

25X1A 2. With respect to a request to  to complete the development of the device, I would like to comment briefly in the light of our discussion on 31 October of development procedures.

a. Technically, the fabrication of a prototype mirror and its testing is a small development program and as such might have fallen within the area of interest of the Director D&P. On the other hand, the proposal for such a mirror grew out of current operations in the field, and Operations is the component best equipped to evaluate the need for it. Accordingly, I think it is appropriate to regard this as a product improvement carried out in response to a suggestion from Operations.

b. In our 31 October discussion we agreed that in Headquarters, Materiel would be the focal point for the review of suggested product improvements and for action to carry out improvements. If, therefore, such a case as this one were to arise in the future, I should think it would have been appropriate to request Materiel to have the prototype mirror fabricated and scheduled for test at Edwards.

25X1A c. In the present case, the matter has reached a point where I believe we should proceed as you suggest and should request  to investigate, in consultation with Lockheed, an answer to the contrail intercept problem.

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2

CHAL 0384

3. I believe we must welcome suggestions and initiatives for product improvement from any source, and I am most anxious that we should not become bureaucratic in following up on such suggestions. At this stage in the life of the U-2 system, many proposals will be of such a character that they can best be followed up by Operations. I do feel, however, that if we are to make Materiel the focal point in Headquarters for securing an appraisal of product improvement proposals and then for following up on them, then that section must be kept up-to-date on the status of a development such as the rear view mirror.

25X1A

  
RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.  
Special Assistant to the Director  
for Planning and Development

RMB:cw

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